



PfA Factsheet: Supported Internships



Supported internships are an effective route to progress towards paid employment for many young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (or equivalent). In 2012/13, 15 Further Education (FE) colleges took part in a trial¹ of supported internships which led to 36% of young people being offered paid employment, compared with a national rate of just 6% for adults with moderate to severe learning difficulties². This factsheet sets out the key information for schools, colleges, young people and their parents, local authorities and employers who are interested in supported internships.

Why has Government introduced supported internships?

The Government's reform of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) system³ includes a greater focus on preparing young people with SEND for adulthood, including employment. The overwhelming majority of young people with SEND are capable of sustainable paid employment with the right preparation and support. The Government wants to raise aspirations about what these young people can achieve in their jobs and careers.

Who are they for?

Supported internships are for young people aged 16 to 24 with an EHC plan, statement of SEN, or Learning Difficulty Assessment who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

Who can offer supported internships?

Any institution that receives a funding allocation directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) can deliver supported internships. This includes FE colleges, schools and independent specialist providers.

What are supported internships?

Supported internships are structured study programmes based primarily at an employer. They are designed to enable young people with SEND to achieve sustainable, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work through learning in the workplace. Internships normally last for a year and include unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.



Students complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if suitable, and English and Maths to an appropriate level.

For the young person, the internship should contribute to their long-term career goals and fit with their working capabilities. For the employer, the internship must meet a real business need, preferably with the potential of a paid job at the end of the programme of study, should the intern meet the required standard.

Job coaches are critical to the success of supported internships. They provide in-work support for young people which tapers off as the individual becomes familiar with their role, but can always be reached if issues arise. Job coaches provide support to employers, increasing their confidence of working with young people and helping them to understand the business case for employing a diverse workforce.

Supported internships reflect the following principles:

- most of the young person's time is spent at the employer's premises;
- young people are expected to comply with real job conditions, such as time-keeping and dress code;
- training in systematic instruction, a method specifically designed to help people with complex learning difficulties learn new tasks, is used where appropriate;
- stretching learning goals are set, including in English and Maths (for further information about exemptions to studying English and Maths GCSE, see page 15 of the supported internship advice⁴); and
- both the young person and the employer have support through a tutor and an expert job coach⁵.
- support continues after the programme of study to make sure that young people get paid jobs and sustainable careers

How are supported internships funded?

Supported internships are funded from a combination of Education Funding Agency core funding (Elements 1 and 2) and top up funding for the required amount from the relevant local authority high needs budget (Element 3). The Department for Work and Pensions' Access to Work fund can pay for job coach support in work placements.

Further information on Access to Work and an application form can be found at: <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships/access-to-work-fund>.

1 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263205/DFE-RR314.pdf

2 NHS Social Care and Mental Health Indicators from the National Indicator Set: 2010-11 at www.data.gov.uk – 6% of people known to social services

3 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

4 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389411/Supported_Internship_Guidance_Dec_14.pdf

5 www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/61

What are the first steps to making supported internships happen?

Here are some of the first steps you'll need to take if you are an education provider, local authority or employer interested in getting involved:

- **Understand the different ways of developing a supported internship:** there is no single way of delivering them. Many ideas can be found in the Department for Education's advice⁶ on setting up and delivering supported internships. Further support and resources can be found on the Preparing for Adulthood website⁷.
- **Understand the business case for employers:** a diverse workforce is good for business, and offering supported internships can be one way for an employer to achieve this. Both the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) have information on their websites about the business case⁸, and there is a section on Preparing for Adulthood's website especially for employers who are considering offering supported internship work placements⁹.
- **Establishing a partnership:** a strong partnership approach is needed to successfully deliver supported internships across all partners, including the young person and their family; the school / college; the employer; and the job coach/supported employment service. A supported employment service can help with engaging effectively with employers¹⁰.

Case study

Employment Works is a supported internship project in Surrey whose partners are Guildford College, the University of Surrey, St Peter's Hospital and EmployAbility. The first term is used for classroom exercises and discussions hosted by Guildford College. The next two terms are spent at an internship placement at either the University of Surrey or St Peter's Hospital with job coach support from EmployAbility.



⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/316676/Supported_internships.pdf

⁷ <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships>

⁸ <http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/diversity-workplace-overview.aspx> and <http://base-uk.org/employers-business-case>

⁹ <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships/dfe-information-for-employers>

¹⁰ <http://base-uk.org/about/members>

Chelsea

Chelsea is profoundly deaf and has learning difficulties, and she was 19 when she started on the project. Her internship was within the Print Shop at the University, and over the course of the 2 terms she gained a range of valuable skills including collating, proof reading, quality checking, using folding and binding machines as well as the ability to take customer orders. At the end of the internship, Chelsea progressed into an Apprenticeship at the Print Shop. She has now finished the Apprenticeship, and continues in employment at the Print Shop and her boss says, "I don't want you to mention that Chelsea is disabled anymore. As far as we and the work are concerned, she has no disability."

David

David is on the Autistic Spectrum, and he was 20 when he started on the project. During the first term, David had additional support to enable workplace visits and travel training to increase his work awareness. His internship was in a variety of catering departments at the University to enable him to develop good coping strategies in managing his anxiety. Over the course of the 2 terms, he gained a range of valuable skills which included clearing and cleaning tables, chairs and tray removal, serving at the food counter, food preparation, coffee shop assistant as well as the ability to use the till. At the end of the internship, David was offered a paid job within the University Catering staff team. This was initially at 15 hours per week to help him adjust to becoming an employee. He now works for 27.5 hours per week and was also a volunteer in catering at the Olympics.

Alan

Alan has a learning disability, and his internship was in the Car Park and Security department at the hospital. Over the course of the 2 terms, Alan gained a range of valuable skills which included dealing with enquiries and requests, issuing staff ID badges, and emptying car park machines. In addition he developed other transferable skills which included team working, communication and reliability. Unfortunately the hospital was unable to offer him a paid job at the end of the internship. However, he continued to get support from EmployAbility, and secured a paid job with a Surrey County Council Care Home as a Kitchen Assistant in his local area. His employer supported him to undertake an NVQ Level 2 in Food Production, which he successfully completed. The Head Chef says, "it is so good to see the huge progress that Alan has made at work. I feel completely confident that he can look after the kitchen and do the ordering on his own in my absence. He is a real team player."



Key Resources

Supported internships resources section on Preparing for Adulthood website:

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships>

Department for Education Advice for FE colleges, sixth forms in academies, maintained and non-maintained schools, independent specialist providers, other providers of study programmes and local authorities:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/316676/Supported_internships.pdf

Department for Education's evaluation of the supported internship trial:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263205/DFE-RR314.pdf

Education Funding Agency – funding guidance for young people 2013/14:

<https://www.gov.uk/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance>

National Occupational Standards for supported employment – statements of skills and knowledge needed by job coaches:

<http://base-uk.org/policy/national-occ-stds>

Preparing for Adulthood factsheet on engaging employers to find work experience for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities: a guide for post-16 providers:

<http://preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources/all-resources/engaging-employers-to-find-work-experience-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties-and-or-disabilities-a-guide-for-post-16-providers>

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Delivering Better Outcomes Together

